

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): Process for removing halide compounds adhering to finely divided metal oxide particles by means of steam, the metal oxide particles being formed by reaction of halide-containing starting materials by hydrolysis or ~~oxidising~~ oxidizing gases, wherein

the finely divided metal oxide particles containing residues of halide compounds are applied, together with reaction gases, to the upper part of an upright column and migrate downwards by means of gravity,

the steam, optionally mixed with air, is applied at the bottom end of the column,

the finely divided metal oxide particles containing residues of halide compounds and the steam are fed counter-currently, and

the metal oxide particles freed of halide residues are removed at the base of the column, and

steam and halide residues are removed at the head of the column,

which process is ~~characterised~~ characterized in that

the column is heated in such a manner that the temperature difference  $T_{bottom} - T_{top}$  between the lower part and the upper part of the column is at least 20°C and a maximum temperature of 500°C prevails in the column, and

the metal oxide particles have a residence time in the column of from 1 second to 30 minutes.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the temperature difference  $T_{bottom} - T_{top}$  is from 20°C to 150°C.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the maximum temperature in the column is from 150 to 500°C.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the residence time is from 5 seconds to 5 minutes.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the metal oxide particles in the stream entering the column have a  
temperature of from about 100°C to 500°C.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the amount of steam that is introduced is from 0.0025 to 0.25 kg of  
steam per hour per kg of metal oxide particles.

Claim 7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 1, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that, after the metal oxide particles have been removed at the base of the  
column, they are passed through at least one further column in which the maximum  
temperature does not exceed 500°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 8, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the metal oxide particles and the steam are fed co-currently or counter-  
currently in the further columns.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): Process according to claim 8, ~~characterised~~  
characterized in that the second and subsequent columns have a temperature difference  $T_{bottom}$   
-  $T_{top}$  between the lower part and the upper part of the columns of at least 5°C.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 2,  
wherein the maximum temperature in the column is from 150 to 500°C.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 2,  
wherein the residence time is from 5 seconds to 5 minutes.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 3,  
wherein the residence time is from 5 seconds to 5 minutes.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 2,  
wherein the metal oxide particles in the stream entering the column have a temperature of  
from about 100°C to 500°C.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 3,  
wherein the metal oxide particles in the stream entering the column have a temperature of  
from about 100°C to 500°C.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 4,  
wherein the metal oxide particles in the stream entering the column have a temperature of  
from about 100°C to 500°C.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 2, wherein the amount of steam that is introduced is from 0.0025 to 0.25 kg of steam per hour per kg of metal oxide particles.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 3, wherein the amount of steam that is introduced is from 0.0025 to 0.25 kg of steam per hour per kg of metal oxide particles.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 4, wherein the amount of steam that is introduced is from 0.0025 to 0.25 kg of steam per hour per kg of metal oxide particles.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): ~~The process of~~ Process according to claim 5, wherein the amount of steam that is introduced is from 0.0025 to 0.25 kg of steam per hour per kg of metal oxide particles.

Claim 21 (New): Process according to claim 1, characterized in that a maximum temperature of 150°C prevails in the column.